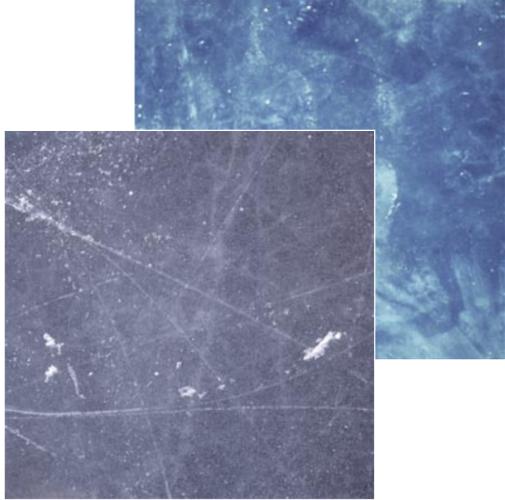




Mapping: metaphor  
artistic strategy  
graphic device  
an exhibition



Routine Photographs. 2000, cibachrome photographs, 24 x 24" (each of 12 prints)

These photographs record the markings left on the ice by figure skaters' blades and the chalk that is left behind on the carpets and the mats from gymnasts' hands. I consider these markings a mapping of the body's movement.



Untitled 2, 2000, clay, 23.5 x 27.5 x 27.5"

Mapping the Mind is a series of textural explorations that I have been working on for several years. I use these organic forms to symbolize the psychological being of the inner self. It is a way of expressing feelings, emotions, sensibilities, and vulnerabilities and all sorts of different complexities within us. The different textures, color tones, and materials work as response triggers. Just as the worked clay responds to my emotional and aesthetic direction, viewers may find their senses responding to this wordless intent.



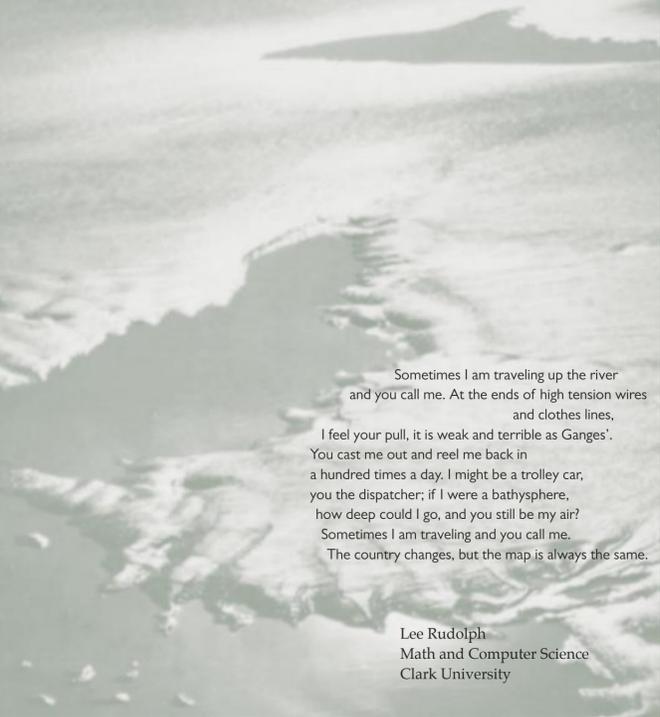
Untitled, 2003, carborundum collagraph on paper, 30 x 20"

When making art, I am making places. These places are made as models or maps for emotion and memory. These sites are sometimes inspired by the divine or the secret. I often refer to insect nests or places that ghosts might dwell, but this is distilled from my trying to make a place that is familiar yet unknown.

Becca Albee

Hilda Maria Alhach

David Bligh



Sometimes I am traveling up the river  
and you call me. At the ends of high tension wires  
and clothes lines,  
I feel your pull, it is weak and terrible as Ganges'.  
You cast me out and reel me back in  
a hundred times a day. I might be a trolley car,  
you the dispatcher; if I were a bathysphere,  
how deep could I go, and you still be my air?  
Sometimes I am traveling and you call me.  
The country changes, but the map is always the same.

Lee Rudolph  
Math and Computer Science  
Clark University

Henry J. Steward  
Graduate School of Geography  
Clark University

Marianne Wiser  
Department of Psychology  
Clark University  
co-author Diana Leyva

The Country Changes

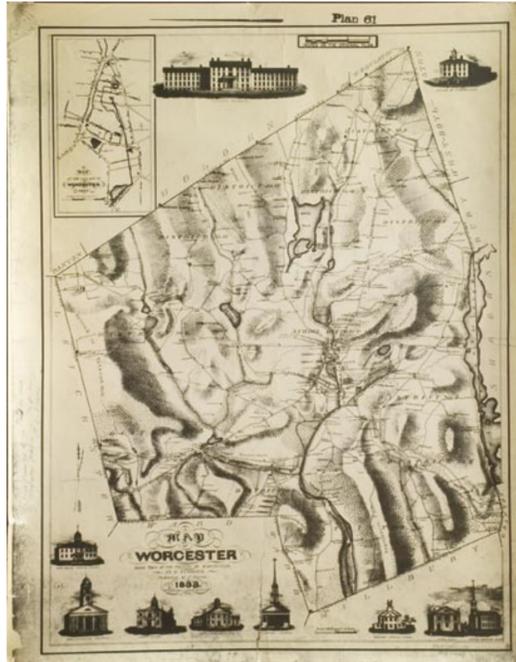
From Mapping to Metacartography

Maps and Psychology

This exhibition explores the map as metaphor, artistic strategy, and graphic device. Mapping implies systems of ordering and surveying, of creating correspondence, pattern, and place and is therefore a powerful form of symbol making. It is not surprising then that so many contemporary artists reference various applications of mapping, from imitating cognitive process in computers to revealing genetic structures—as well as the simple impulse to understand spatial relationship. A map is a plan, a trace, and a coding system. It is as ancient as the human ability to make signs. The map is also a metaphor for journey, and for locating ourselves in the interstices of time and space. That these logical charts also happen to be beautiful is yet another matter. As such the map is perhaps the quintessential meeting place of art and science.

Concurrent to the exhibition of fifteen artists' work, some special programming further illuminates the broad conceptual currency of mapping. The panel presentation offers insights about mapping from different academic disciplines including geography, math, psychology, and art. Denis Wood, Ph.D. in Geography from Clark University, and currently working as a writer/artist also provides a comprehensive view on the relationship of maps and art. The university setting is the ideal context for this dialogue and Clark is renowned, too, for its superb cartographic collection, the presence of which stimulated thinking about this curatorial project.

Elli Crocker  
Visual and Performing Arts  
Clark University



Map of Worcester, H. Stebbins, 1883, courtesy of the Guy Burnham Map and Aerial Photography Library at Clark University

Artists make maps. As this exhibition, *Mapping*, makes plain, more and more often artists paint maps, sculpt maps, perform maps. Inspired by maps made by the Surrealists, by Marcel Duchamp, by Joseph Cornell, by the Situationists, by Pop Artists, and especially by Conceptualists of every stripe—maybe even by the work of environmental psychologists here at Clark—artists in increasing numbers have taken up the map as an expressive medium. In an age less and less enamored of traditional forms of representation—and increasingly critical—maps have numerous attractions. Beyond their formal continuities, especially given contemporary painting's commitments to abstraction, surface, flatness, pattern, and formal systems of sign-making, maps and paintings are both communicative, that is, are constructs intended to affect behavior. As the energy of painting has been dispersed over the past half century into earth art, conceptual art, installation art, performance art, video art, cyber art, and so on, it has dispersed the map as a subject along with it. The irresistible tug maps exert on artists arises from the map's mask of neutral objectivity, from its mask of unauthored dispassion. Artists either strip this mask off, or refuse to put it on. In either case artists simultaneously point to the mask worn by the map, while entering unmasked into the very discourse of the map. In so doing map artists are erasing the line cartographers have tried to draw between their form of graphic communication (maps) and other (drawings, paintings, and so on). In this way map artists are reclaiming the map as a discourse function for people in general. The flourishing of map art signals the imminent demise of the map as a privileged form of communication. *The map is dead! Long live the map!*

Denis Wood, Ph.D  
author of *The Power of Maps*

Schedule

Curator's Note

Acknowledgements

Map Art

Map Art  
Thursday, March 24, 4:30 pm (Razzo Hall)  
Artist and writer Denis Wood, author of *The Power of Maps*, will speak on the relationship between maps and contemporary art.

Panel Discussion  
Wednesday, March 30, 4–5 pm (Razzo Hall)  
Mapping as seen from the perspective of different disciplines: Math Prof. Lee Rudolph; Geography Prof. Henry Steward; artist Heidi Whitman and Psychology Prof. Marianne Wiser.

Opening Reception  
Wednesday, March 30, 5:30–6:30 pm

Curator  
Elli Crocker,  
Associate Professor of Studio Art

Guest Speaker  
Denis Wood,  
Ph.D. Clark University,  
author of *The Power of Maps*

Panelists  
Lee Rudolph,  
Professor of Math/Computer Science  
Henry Steward,  
Associate Professor of Geography  
Heidi Whitman,  
Exhibiting Artist  
Marianne Wiser,  
Associate Professor of Psychology

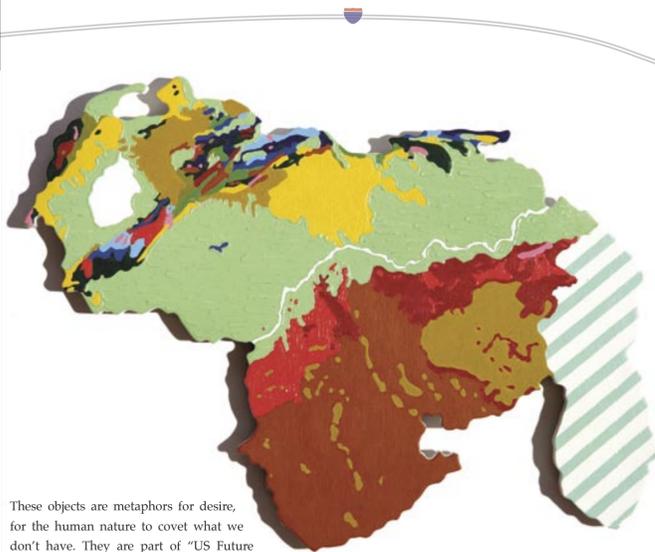
Artists  
Becca Albee, Brooklyn, NY  
Hilda Maria Alhach, Florence, MA  
David Bligh, Chestnut Hill, MA  
Leila Daw, Branford, CT  
Gary Duehr, Somerville, MA  
Dan Mills, Lewisburg, PA  
Barbara Milot, Turners Falls, MA  
Lior Neiger, Brighton, MA  
Mark Schäfer, Cambridge, MA  
Rachel Schuder, Brooklyn, NY  
Patty Stone, Newton, MA  
Andrea Thompson, Medford, MA  
Deborah Waimon, New Milford, CT  
Matthew Weber, Unionville, CT  
Heidi Whitman, Boston, MA

Gallery Interns  
Lydia Hawkins '05  
Jasmin Mujkanovic '05  
Victoria Mata '05  
Lauren Udelhoven '05  
Jamie Wrubel '05

Design  
David Howland '06, catalogue  
Bhavya Kapoor '05, poster, alt. catalogue  
Lauren Udelhoven '05, invitation  
Sarah Buie,  
Professor of Studio Art, advisor

Assistance  
Beverly Presley, Librarian  
Guy Burnham Map and Aerial  
Photography Library at Clark University

Support for the exhibition, catalogue, and special events given by the Higgins School of Humanities at Clark University



These objects are metaphors for desire, for the human nature to covet what we don't have. They are part of "US Future States," a large ongoing project I began in early 2003 in response to current events.

New Venice, 2003, acrylic on wood, 12 x 15.75 x 1.25"



These photographs, derived from publicly available satellite pictures on the Internet, demonstrate a kind of extreme voyeurism. Anyone, anywhere, at any time, may be documented as they drive to the grocery store, water the front lawn, or grab lunch downtown.

The people glimpsed here and there—from a top view, at the resolution of half a dozen pixels, mostly denoted by the shadow they throw—become forlorn, ghostly figures. And the landscape they inhabit, seen from the air, appears as a desolate array of buildings, cars and streets, much like a Monopoly board.

Tinted sepia, with pixels creating an impressionistic feel, the images balance nostalgia against scientific survey. Questions of homeland security and insecurity are raised. Do we feel safer, or merely more fearful, from knowing that our whereabouts can be pinpointed to within seven feet at any given moment?

Topeka #1, 2004, pigment print on vinyl, 36 x 36"



Doesn't Stand A Chance, mixed media on four canvas panels, 85 x 149"

I've been working with concepts of mapping since the early 1980's, when I mapped ancient Native American sites in skywriting smoke over their former locations. I've always been fascinated by all that mapping involves: finding your way around, locating yourself in time and space, understanding the nature of your environment. What is mapping, anyway? It's the way we project one set of ideas (such as where you can drive a car) onto another (such as the landscape). It's the way we represent complex three and four dimensional concepts (like changes in national boundaries during wars) on two dimensional surfaces. It's a way to make unseeable information (like temperature gradients around the globe) visible. Maps are filters through which we look at the world; the same place is represented in many different ways, depending upon what is being mapped. Maps tell us what we are looking at, but also determine what we see. Ultimately, however true-to-objective-reality we imagine our maps to be, they are all intrinsically subjective, exercises in the imaginations of individuals or committees.



Shortcut Boston-Mexico City, 1994, charcoal on paper, 13 x 16"

For thousands of years, one of the most common forms of landscape image has been the map. My (re)creation of landscapes continues in that tradition while at the same time questioning it, inciting the viewer to ask questions and mangling our common expectations of how we represent place. When I reassemble maps of the world, I seek to challenge conventional representations of the external world and to reveal the hidden pathways of the imagination.



Globe, 2003, stills from 3 minute video

Divided in two, each side of the screen features a globe turning quickly and slowing to a halt. Each time it stops, a random encounter is created between two geographical areas. Tension is thus generated between the representation of reality in each of the two screen parts and the new place created by the juxtaposition of the two, attesting to the potential of border changes, migration of nations, the movement of continents, etc. The work touches upon questions of immigration, occupation, colonialism, globalization, terrorism, arbitrariness, and play (it contains an element of a casino game). The work elicits questions concerning knowledge and orientation, confronting us with the realization that between every two spots in the world there is always some kind of connection (whether economic, political, geographical, historical or cultural). If we do not know what that link is, it is only because we, as viewers, lack knowledge about it.



Ribbon Map (detail), 2003, ink on silk ribbon, 2 x 80"

I am fascinated by all detailed diagrams, but particularly by maps. Maps are diagrams of the physical world that allow us to visualize and navigate that world. We orient ourselves in the larger world with maps. They allow us to move about in unfamiliar areas and then to find our way back to the original place. In a world of randomness in which we have little control, maps are a way of providing order and a sense of security. In addition to the conceptual aspects of maps, I am inspired by the beauty of antique maps—the precision and linear detail of the engraving and the delicate compositional balance of the page. I would like my work to imply human presence by its resemblance to recognizable maps and to leave the viewer wondering about the nature of the map.



Then and There, 2004, birch plywood, glass, foam, found maps, 14.5 x 10.5 x 4"

This work investigates the way that personal experience defines our understanding of place. The viewer must construct the artwork's narrative from incomplete elements: interchangeable base maps and glass slides containing storyline fragments. We think of maps as objective, neutral descriptions of location. The slides, however, contain purely subjective, self-referential descriptions: *We would have to go around, or it started to all look the same.* These phrases suggest that our understanding of a place is, in fact, a construction of subjective associations, independent of the specific location. Yet we also use the maps to fill in the missing particulars of the fragmentary narrative; the phrase *No one would find us there* implies one story when placed on a remote wilderness trail, a different one in downtown Tokyo. Shifting the constructed storylines from one context to another is a surreal experiment in the meaning of location, and the elusive location of meaning.



Flight Path 3, 2003, acrylic, sand and plaster on canvas, 46 x 80"

These paintings are derived in part from several flight maps I inherited from my father, a WWII pilot who died in 1998. The paintings resonate for me on many levels. They are reminders of my father, and his great love for flying, but also reflect some of the post 9/11 anxiety I feel in an age of airline hijacking, terrorism and targeted bombing. The maps on which many of the paintings are based come from areas of the Rio Grande valley and parts of the southwest where I grew up. I spent many hours hiking in the dry washes and mountains of New Mexico. The textured surfaces here indicate a vast, dry, aerial landscape. The geometric shapes superimposed over the surface derive from the controlled or restricted flying areas around airports or designate flight patterns, or an area of radio frequency. The geometric shapes may also suggest targets and allude to our collective guilt and vulnerability.



55 Flatbush 360°, 2000, still from 4 minute, 13 second video

I stood on the roof of my apartment building holding a video camera in one hand and used the other outstretched hand to trace the skyline in a 360° arc. In this piece, as in much of my work, I am using my artmaking practice to shorten distances: physical, temporal and psychological, and the distance between what I want and restrictions imposed by reality. This video provides a fiction where I can collapse space to fulfill my own impossible desires, or at least illuminate my need to try. It could be said that I am mapping out these desires onto the environment around me. In so doing, I mean to address the potential as well as the limits of representation, the persistence of even the most unlikely wishes, and the subjectivity of perception.



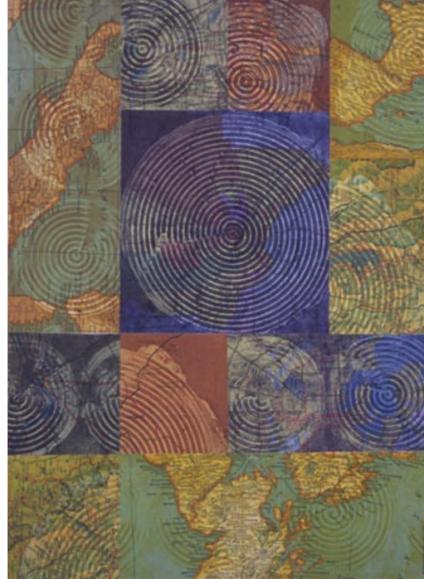
Cartographer's Daydream / Brain Terrain #87, 2004, gouache/ink on kitakata paper, 38.5 x 53.5"

Privately I call my map paintings "wrong maps", as they'll only get the viewer lost. As a child, I liked to look at floor plans and would lay out my own elaborate "houses" using match boxes, string, dolls; an early attempt to make the world a board game. Maps, charts, and diagrams help us to understand something of our surroundings. Through mapping, I find my way in drawing and painting while diagramming humans' innate need to settle, divide, and dominate the earth. For several years I've drawn heads, brains, and minds as imagined territory. In charting invented mental processes, the recent *Brain Terrain* series forms a group of mental maps. References to anatomy merge with elements of cartography. Computer networks, ancient ruins, floor plans, fortifications, and city grids coexist in a time and space compressed world.



Large Interior Ring Trace, 2004, carved pine, 25 x 41" diameter

These works map three-dimensional volumes from the growth rings inherent in the anatomy of trees. The rings are traced to reveal positive and negative planes referencing strip-mined and terraced geographic topography. Human powered and mechanical interventions into the landscape parallel the production of these works through the direct and irreversible act of carving. My artistic intent is to address the interdependence of raw material production and the alteration of forested landscapes.



Cartography XVII, 2002, collagraph/map fragments, 10 x 13"

My fascination with the graphic nature of maps has led to an investigation of their basic elements. This exploration focuses on those elements that remain when the map is no longer used for navigation. The realization that these simple tools of communication will soon leave our lives and be replaced by screen and voice generated instruction has led to the creation of this body of work. Fragments of maps from the 1950s to the present have been overprinted with small collagraph plates. The individual images generated from these plates are assembled with consideration for color, line and balance. Elements from several different maps comprise each of the works in the *Cartography* series.